



FOLLOW-UP OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DIALOGUE OF HIGH LEVEL MSME AUTHORITIES

CANADA

TITLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE:

BUSINESS WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Country: Canada

Coordinating Institution: Global Affairs Canada

Other institutions involved: N/A

Duration of the experience: 1997-present

Webpage: www.businesswomenintrade.gc.ca

Social networks: <http://linkd.in/bwit-faci>

Area of the successful experience:

- Assistance to SMEs, taking into account the needs of women entrepreneurs (Working Group 3)

Official logo of the successful experience: N/A

DETAILED INFORMATION

1) Description

Recognizing the important role that women play in contributing to domestic economic growth, the Government of Canada supports women entrepreneurs through the Canadian Business Women in International Trade (BWIT) program. Since its inception in 1997, BWIT has been providing advice, products and services that link Canadian women entrepreneurs with international business opportunities to help spur their company's growth. BWIT is part of Global Affairs Canada's Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) and leverages the TCS presence in 161 cities abroad and in Canada. The key services of the TCS for Canadian companies are: preparation for international markets; market potential assessment; find qualified contacts; and resolve business problems.



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2) Beneficiaries

The principle beneficiaries of the BWIT program are Canadian women entrepreneurs/business owners. A women-owned business is defined as a business that is 51% owned, operated and controlled by one or more women.

3) Implementation of the experience

BWIT works with other Canadian federal departments [Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED); Status of Women Canada] provincial partners, businesswomen's associations; as well as service providers and private organizations across Canada. BWIT offers advice, products and services to engage and serve women-owned business clients:

- The Businesswomenintrade.gc.ca website provides information on the BWIT program and its products and services.
- [BWIT's Annual Newsletter](#) showcases successful Canadian women exporters, promotes the benefits of exporting to women, and provides them with resources.
- [Women-Focused Trade Missions](#) provide women entrepreneurs with opportunities to secure contracts globally. BWIT and the TCS give women entrepreneurs the intelligence and market entry vehicles to successfully globalize.
- The [BWIT LinkedIn Group](#) is a platform for women to engage, find new business opportunities, network, and exchange valuable information.
- The [Canadian Company Capabilities searchable directory of women-owned businesses](#) is a means for women entrepreneurs to self-register to promote their products and services to over 5 million annual visitors and procurement professionals from around the world.
- BWIT contributes quarterly posts published on the [Canada Business Network Blog \(ISED\)](#). There is also an annual women-focused edition for International Women's Day of the Trade Commissioner Service's [CanadExport](#) magazine.

4) Accomplishments and Results

- BWIT has observed an increase in demand for products and services for women since its inception, given a greater awareness of the potential of women-owned businesses and the challenges that they face in the domestic and international marketplaces. For example, BWIT's website gets approximately 22K hits annually; BWIT's LinkedIn Group now has more than 1,700 members and is growing; The Canadian Company Capabilities searchable directory of women-owned businesses has more than 640 registrants; and the 2000 copies of the annual newsletter are distributed.
- Women-focused trade missions have been an effective way to connect Canadian women business owners with international opportunities. There have been more than 600 delegates to BWIT trade missions in the past 7 years. Millions of dollars of contracts have been secured from these trade missions. For the past 7 years, BWIT has organized trade missions to the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) National Conference and Business Fair in the United States. This is the largest supplier diversity procurement trade show in North America. For the past two years, BWIT has organized



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delegations to the Go for the Greens Business Development Conference for Women Entrepreneurs in Orlando, Florida (September).

5) Offers of cooperation with the region to exchange good practices

| Modalities of Cooperation | Modalities of cooperation offered by the institution to regional partners (mark with an X) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Sharing of information via e-mail | X |
| Teleconferences | X |
| Videoconferences | X |
| Workshops | |
| Mentoring | |
| Technical tours and visits of experts | |
| Others – Please describe | Women-Focused Trade Missions (*as per commitments under the NACW in partnership with MUSEIC) |

(*Under the North American Competitiveness Workplan, Canada, the U.S. and Mexico are working to strengthen their collaboration on activities to promote women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) under the umbrella of the Subcommittee on Women’s Entrepreneurship of the Mexico-United States Entrepreneurship and Innovation Council (MUSEIC).

6) Main contact information:

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Canada

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businesswomenintrade.gc.ca

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TCS/SDC